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Social Education and Social Pedagogy: Reclaiming a Scottish Tradition in Social Work

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Article for review in European Journal of Social Work

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Social Education and Social Pedagogy: Reclaiming a Scottish Tradition in Social Work

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Abstract

Social pedagogy is the discipline underpinning work with children and youth across most of Europe. The concept has struggled to find a place within social work in the English-speaking world, partly because of difficulties in translation and partly as a result of different welfare traditions. In particular there is a limited conception of education within the Anglo Saxon tradition and a consequent bifurcation of education and care. This article argues that ideas enshrined within social pedagogy have a resonance with Scottish approaches to social welfare, which culminate ~~in the proposals for social education departments contained~~ in the Kilbrandon Report of 1964. We argue that there are recurrent themes in the Scottish tradition with roots in the Reformation and the Scottish Enlightenment. Foremost amongst these is the focus on education as a vehicle for both individual improvement and social cohesion. Social pedagogy or social education offers an integrating conceptual base from which to develop models of social work practice which promote social wellbeing through socio-educational strategies. The current Review of social work in Scotland offers opportunities to reclaim a socio-educational tradition.

Keywords:

Social pedagogy, social education, social wellbeing, Scotland, Europe

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Social Education and Social Pedagogy: Reclaiming a Scottish Tradition in Social Work

Introduction

The term social pedagogy is not well understood in the English-speaking world. Yet, in many European countries it is the main discipline underpinning work with children and youth.—(Cameron 2004, p.133). Its principles can be extended to working with individuals and groups across the life-course (Petrie, 2001). The possibilities held out by social pedagogical approaches in a UK context have been mooted periodically over the years (Warner, 1992, Davies-Jones, 2000, —Kent, 1997, Higham, 2001, Kornbeck, 2002). Pedagogical ideas articulated by academics at the Thomas Coram Institute at the University of London (Moss and Petrie 2002, Cameron, 2004, Petrie, 2004) have found their way into *Every Child Matters* the government's Green Paper for England and Wales on the future direction of children's services.—(DfES, 2004). This suggests that social pedagogy have a stronger influence on the training of the early years workforce.

In Scotland, the recently published 21st Century Review of Social Work, (Scottish Executive, 2006) entails a fundamental review of the profession's role and function. A literature review on the role of the social worker (Asquith, et al 2005), prepared for the Review posits social pedagogy as an example of an alternative model for social work practice and identifies a link between it and the model of social education proposed in the Kilbrandon Report (1964). It is this link we develop in this article. We consider Kilbrandon as the culmination of persistent strands of a distinct Scottish tradition in relation to social education and social welfare. Many of these strands were diluted as social work developed following the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, with the result that leading to Kilbrandon's concept of social education was becoming subsumed under the umbrella of a new generically based profession. We argue that social work has struggled to find a satisfactory conceptual or practice base for work with children—and youth and their families and that there is merit in Scotland revisiting its heritage in this

area and, in so doing, joining with the mainstream of European practice. Ideas encapsulated in social pedagogy are consonant with Scottish philosophical traditions of social education – ‘education in its widest sense’, - social wellbeing and social cohesion and offer possibilities for the development of integrative approaches to social welfare.

The article provides a historical overview of Scottish traditions of social welfare and compares these to ideas contained within models of social pedagogy. These are then contrasted with dominant Anglo-American paradigms. Inevitably, in attempting such a broad sweep, we risk generalisation and over simplification and our account does not do justice to the differences and disjunctions within many of the terms we use. We are aware for instance that there is no one model of social pedagogy, (Petrie, 2006 suggests that the term “pedagogies” is more appropriate), nor is there one-a single Anglo-American social work paradigm and indeed dominant paradigms may alter with time. What we seek to do is identify broad trends across different traditions to help illuminate present day service delivery and to introduce possible directions for future development.

A Scottish Tradition

Following political Union with England in 1707, Scotland retained distinct legal and education systems along with a national church, the Church of Scotland. These institutions are central to the social welfare traditions of the country, yet their distinctiveness can be ignored or subsumed within historical accounts which reflect dominant Anglo-American traditions of social work and social welfare. —(see Carlebach 1970 for instance). Following (Fulcher, 1998), we assert the importance of culture in the delivery of social work services and argue that current service delivery reflects and can perhaps only be properly understood in cultural and historical context.

Church and Society

Traditions of integrated social care and education for children were evident in the pre-Reformation church in Scotland. Early collections of Celtic church law included detailed provisions for the care of foundlings and orphans (Furnivall, et al 2001). The

Reformation of 1560 placed the onus of providing social welfare onto local parish communities, which were expected to care for the sick, orphans and those who had fallen on hard times. The Kirk, as well as administering poor relief was also responsible for education, to ensure that everyone should have direct access to The Bible unmediated by the clergy. In order to do so they had to be able to read; a school was built in every parish and the educational ideal became well established in Scottish life. Whilst the motivation for mass education had doctrinal roots, its nature, certainly at university level, was broad and encouraging of a metaphysical disputatiousness. Social structures likewise were influenced by a ‘militant democracy’ and were strikingly egalitarian and accountable (Furnivall, et al, 2001). Social wellbeing, social education and social cohesion in Scotland were seen to have common roots.

The parish system adopted community-based approaches to social welfare. The preferred way of responding to orphan or destitute children was for them to be ‘boarded out’ with respectable families. The workhouse model of poor relief, which was predominant in England, was virtually unknown in Scotland outwith Glasgow, Edinburgh and Paisley (Triseliotis 1988). ‘Outdoor’ or community-based relief was far more common. A preference for community rather than institutionally based responses to social problems was embedded in the Scottish tradition.

The Enlightenment

Checkland (1980) argues that modern Scottish welfare provision exists on a continuum reaching back to the Reformation. It was nurtured significantly by the philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment. While the Enlightenment more generally was a European phenomenon, it exhibited distinctive features in a Scottish context, where the writings of Francis Hutcheson, David Hume and Adam Smith have been particularly influential. However, overall, according to Tronto (1993 p.36), ‘the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers represent the ‘losing’ side in moral thinking in the eighteenth century.’ They lost out to the increasing predominance of the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant’s ethical theories.

The difference between the two strands of thought is essentially this. Morality, for Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, was inevitably contextual; it could not exist independently of social and political context. Kantian ethics, by contrast rely on a belief in a universal order based on reason and principle. Kant's universal, abstract view of human nature has become a defining feature of the modern period. It privileges decision-making based on scientific reason and the regulation of social action through ethical codes. Politically Kantianism, with its emphasis in individualism and individual responsibility, led to the growth of and finds its home in liberalism. It underpins current neo-liberal thinking and has been a dominant ideology in the development of social work ethics (Wilks, 2005). Neo-liberal faith in prescriptivism continues Kant's belief that society can be changed by 'rational' legislation rather than through education and training and the patient acquisition of virtuous social habits.

Another feature of the Scottish Enlightenment was a philosophy of 'common sense.' This was sceptical of the technical and rational science associated with the wider European Enlightenment and particularly with the English radicals such as Bentham and Mill. Common sense philosophy involved the democratisation of knowledge. A dialectic was required between expert knowledge and the instinctive sense of the common man, which encouraged 'an anti-individualism, almost a kind of socialism' (Davie, 1991 p.62). According to the Scottish philosophers, the specialisation of knowledge as propounded by the English radicals led to excessive compartmentalisation and atomisation in society. Scotland maintained a faith in a generalist education, with philosophy at its heart, as the best means through which to encourage social improvement. So, essentially Enlightenment thought took different forms in England and Scotland, the former going down an essentially Platonic road with preferences for rational idealism, while Scotland drew more upon an Aristotelian legacy of common sense and pragmatic empiricism. This difference in philosophical direction is reflected in approaches to social welfare.

The ragged schools

A practical insight into the influence of Scottish philosophical traditions on social welfare is offered in the example of the Scottish industrial feeding school (Seed, 1974). The first

industrial feeding or 'ragged' school opened in Aberdeen in 1841, under the patronage of Sheriff Watson, a local judge. It sought 'to feed, train in work habits and give basic education' to the children who attended. The ideas underpinning what became known as 'the Aberdeen model' differed significantly from contemporary English approaches to delinquency, which were more likely to emphasise the diagnosis of moral failings and the application of specific interventions to address these (Carlebach 1970). Watson's idea of the industrial feeding school stressed understandings of behaviour rooted in social context. They were community resources reflecting a national aversion to institutional care (Seed 1974, Triseliotis 1988). They emphasised voluntary, day as opposed to compulsory, residential attendance, contrary to the views of the foremost English reformer, Mary Carpenter, who argued that compulsion was a pre-requisite for rehabilitation (Urquhart, 2005).

The family was placed at the heart of the 'ragged school' philosophy; the hope of Thomas Guthrie, who was instrumental in the growth of the ragged schools was that children should return home, "carrying with them many a holy lesson as Christian missionaries to these dwellings of darkness and sin" (Smith 1991). Such assumptions, by stressing an interactive relationship and attempting to use the child as a benign influence upon the family to which he or she returned each evening, challenge constructions of the child within today's child protection or youth crime discourses as mere recipients of pernicious family influences. Teachers undertook a role in visiting families to reinforce the social and religious messages children had learnt in school; this was education of the whole child and through the child of their wider family and society - 'social education'.

A particularly prescient feature of the Aberdeen schools was the establishment of a child's asylum committee in 1846, which according to Seed (1974),

In several ways,... resembled a modern children's hearing. The criterion was whether children were in need or whether they had committed offences. The committee was composed of representatives of the local community appointed by the Town Council, the parochial boards, the committees of management of the industrial schools and a representative from a multi-purpose charity known as the 'house of Refuge...The great

advantage sought here was to avoid stamping the child for life with the character of a convicted felon before he deserved it (p. 323)

Acts of the UK Parliament of 1861 and 1865 sounded the death knell for Watson and Guthrie's conception of the industrial feeding school, introducing compulsion through applying funding only to children committed to the schools through the courts, thus superimposing the prevailing English reformatory and industrial school model under the direction of the Home Office. This imposed a distinction between the actual offender and the child who may turn to offending through a lack of care. Nevertheless, aspects of the Scottish system, particularly the universality and avoidance of stigma, survived by habit and repute as is evident in a government report from 1896, which states that, 'Scotch reformatories are not looked upon with public favour on account of the aversion felt by the Scotch people to the imprisonment of children' (Seed, 1974).

A distinct tradition

A historical perspective suggests distinct elements of a Scottish tradition of social welfare. This tradition points to ways of conceiving social problems that are rooted in social context and responses to these that are broadly socio-educational. The educational ideal seems to have been firmly rooted in Scotland in a way that resonates with continental European views of education as we explore below. —Features of a distinct Scottish tradition might be summed up in a need to cater for children's physical and social needs, prevention rather than cure, a focus on the needs of the child rather than their misdeeds, voluntarism, and a preference for day provision which maintained family ties. Underpinning all of this was an appreciation of education as a force for social change, within a system that emphasised structure, discipline and rigour. Belief in education as a force for social change, whilst not completely absent in England and Wales, was less pronounced there. It is integral to models of social pedagogy existing elsewhere in Europe.

What is social pedagogy?

An educational ideal in European Enlightenment thought can be found in Rousseau's *Emile*. Rousseau's ideas were developed by Pestalozzi in the early 19th century. Pestalozzi's aim was to educate the whole child; this required the active involvement of the learner in the learning process and included three elements - hands, heart and head, principles that remain central to current notions of social pedagogy (Petrie, 2004). There was a social dimension to the work of Pestalozzi and his followers. They were 'educators of the poor' working in special schools but also in poor rural areas; 'a sort of development aid worker - a combination of teacher and community worker' (Tuggener, 1986 cited in Davies-Jones, 2000). Education in such a model became fundamentally linked with social development and the creation of community.

The concept of *social* pedagogy, which assumes a more structural dimension, has roots in German philosophical responses to industrialisation and concerns about loss of community and in the democratic movements that emerged across Europe following the revolutions of 1848. The term is associated with Karl Mager, but the concept was developed by the Prussian educator, Diesterweg (Hamalainen, 2003). It had distinct egalitarian and reformist underpinnings. Diesterweg argued that 'social pedagogy should be expressed in 'educational action by which one aims to help the poor in society (infed, 2005).' Its aim is to promote wellbeing through broadly based socio-educational strategies. However, it also goes beyond that and seeks to find educational solutions to social problems (Hamalainen, 2003).

Social pedagogy developed a professional status following World War 2 and is the model of practice currently applied to differing degrees to work with children and youth across most of Europe. In France the broad term is *educateur*, with a particular adjective attached to denote the setting and type of work involved but the idea is similar, that of providing an education which extends beyond the academic. (The community development aspects entailed in Northern European models of social pedagogy are captured within the notion of *education populaire*, serviced by the profession of *animateurs socio-culturels* in France). In Germany the term for a pedagogue, *erzieher*,

translates to ‘upbringer’ capturing the holistic nature of the task as involving all aspects of a child’s growth and development. Social pedagogy relates to the whole person: body, mind, feelings, spirit, creativity and, crucially, the relationship of the individual to others – their social connectedness.’ (Petrie, 2001b: 18). The religious idea of ‘formation’ might be used to sum up the complex task (Lorenz, 1994).

While social pedagogy is generally concerned with direct practice with children and youth, social educational principles can be applied to wider questions of social integration in different phases of the lifespan. The approach is based on the belief that you can influence social circumstances and social change through education. While political action strives to effect the external elements of society, - structures, institutions and legislation, social educational action aspires to change society by influencing the personal in society: people, morals and culture. It is grounded in opposition to individualistic approaches to education that fail to consider the social dimensions of human existence. The relationship of social pedagogy to social work varies from country to country across Europe; in the Nordic countries students take a common two or three years of professional training before specializing in either social work or social pedagogy (Juliusdottir and Petersson, 2003). Social pedagogic principles underpin social work practice.

The concept of social pedagogy has never really caught on in the Anglo-American tradition. When the term pedagogy is used at all it ‘is mostly used in the science of teaching and learning (Petrie 2001a: 23), locating education within the cognitive domain of the classroom. Care, by contrast is something that happens within the confines of the family rather than with a more collective ‘social’ (Whyte 2001).

Similarities between social pedagogy and social education

Some obvious conceptual similarities emerge between European and Scottish approaches to work with children and youth. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the focus on social context; human beings have responsibilities to the communities in which they live, but

similarly, these communities have responsibilities towards their members. Ideas around common-good or common-weal are fundamental to social wellbeing. This belief is reflected in the duty on local authorities in Scots law to 'promote social welfare' (s12 of Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968) which is still in force today.

Within both European and Scottish traditions the preferred driver of social improvement and change is education. An educational experience based around an equal exchange of ideas was viewed as important in promoting egalitarian and democratic ideals and social cohesion. For individuals seen to undermine social cohesion, the response was additional measures of education, not just of a cognitive or intellectual nature, but education 'in its widest sense, involving a community concern for the 'whole' child or person in their social context. This kind of thinking was reflected in the Kilbrandon report.

The Kilbrandon Legacy

The Kilbrandon Report (1964) in many respects represents both the culmination but also perhaps a point of foreclosure for ideas of social education in Scotland. During the 1950's problems of youth crime and delinquency became a matter of increasing public concern. In 1961 a committee was established under Lord Kilbrandon to review arrangements for dealing with young people involved in offending and those in need of care or protection. The committee accepted growing evidence from the developing social sciences that it was not helpful to separate young people who offend from those offended against - in both cases something had gone wrong in the child's upbringing, reflecting unmet needs for protection, control, education and care. They took the view that

similarities in the underlying situation of juvenile offenders ... and children in need of care and protection 'far outweigh the differences' and that 'the true distinguishing factor...is their need for special measures of education and training, the normal upbringing processes having, for whatever reason, fallen short.' para 15.

It was argued that such children and young people should be dealt with within an integrated system able to respond effectively to needs arising from a failure in the upbringing process. The emphasis was on the *needs* of the individual child as the test for action and not simply or solely on their *deeds*. The thinking of the Kilbrandon Committee was strongly educational, reflecting longstanding views that social wellbeing and social cohesion through education should be the ambition of the system. Children's problems were to be responded to through what was described as 'social education ', which involved working in partnership with parents to strengthen 'those natural influences for good which will assist the child's development into a mature and useful member of society.' The committee stressed wider family and community responsibility and early, voluntary, rather than compulsory, intervention. The integration of social welfare and educational services was to involve a new field organization, the Department of Social Education located within the Department of Education and staffed mainly by social workers.

Kilbrandon was also responsible for the creation of Scotland's Children's Hearings system, concluding that existing court arrangements failed to give full effect to the social educational principle and proposing instead a new system, which separated out the court's dual functions of determining legal judgments around guilt or innocence and decisions about intervention. Proposals for a Children's Hearings system were accepted by the white paper Social Work in the Community (1966), became law following the Social Work (Scotland) Act, 1968 and were implemented in 1971. Hearings are non-criminal tribunals where young people and their family appear before three lay panel members drawn from the community in order to seek an extra judicial resolution of problems.

The Kilbrandon Committee's thinking can be misunderstood by commentators, who often conceptualise changes within the dialectic of traditional notions of justice and welfare. Bruce (1971), however, recognised that Kilbrandon's approach was an attempt at a paradigm shift. Dissatisfaction with the criminal justice model - crime, conviction and punishment - resulted in proposals to establish a new approach. The committee was keen to find a way to respond to youth, one that was distinctively not Anglo-American - indeed

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parliamentary papers indicate that Kilbrandon was keen not to follow the juvenile court approach adopted in England and Wales. The proposed new system drew upon (and appealed to), consciously or otherwise, principles that were extant within the Scottish tradition, those of needs rather than deeds, best interests, partnership with parents, but most of all, a belief in the efficacy of education - in its widest sense - to address social problems.

The social work interlude and the crisis in social work

In the period between the publication of the Kilbrandon Report and its enactment in legislation in the 1968 Social Work (Scotland) Act an increasingly powerful social work lobby latched on to Kilbrandon's ideas but located them within a rubric of generic social work rather than social education. The White Paper, Social Work and the Community, 1966, reflected the strength of the social work lobby during a period of social optimism and proposed generically organised social work departments offering cradle to grave welfare services. This became embedded in legislation through the 1968 Act. The coherence of Kilbrandon's case for a model of social education was lost. Nevertheless, the communitarian aspects of Kilbrandon provided a rallying call for social welfare professionals in Scotland reflecting a wider consensus in the Scottish body politic of the time around inclusion and social cohesion. Other examples of this might be found in the comprehensive school system –

a policy entirely based on the premise that educational success and failure cannot be understood only in educational terms but must be related to the social and economic circumstances faced by children. From that same time, too, we have the internationally respected Scottish system of community education, linking education, youth work and community development in an attempt to regenerate whole communities, enabling them to take responsibility for their own lives. (Paterson 1999).

An Anglo-American Model

The location of welfare within wider social context, apparent in Scottish and European models, is less pronounced in Anglo-American traditions. Discourses of social welfare in the US derive from the Elizabethan Poor Laws which, according to Lister (2004),

... were transplanted and adapted to the New World of North America where they continue to shape attitudes and policies towards 'the poor' ... They reinforce a belief in self-help and the American Dream, which constitutes poverty as a failure (p.104).

Myers (2000) argues that social problems in the US are seen as a symptom of poor character, a consequence of psychological or familial dysfunction. As a result, responses to social problems tend to be located at the level of the individual, detached from social and wider community context. As [UK](#) social work developed as a profession it was heavily influenced by American psycho-social traditions (Higham 2001) and by the latter part of the twentieth century, practice became focused on casework, albeit social casework models. Over the past couple of decades case management and deficit based approaches have reinforced the focus on the individual at the expense of broader social-educational approaches. This is not a unitary picture and there have been points where the profession might have taken a different direction. The settlement movement, for example, based on Jane Addams' life work, contains strong social educational elements. For the most part however, an individual casework approach has prevailed.

Deficit based [and correctional](#) models fit with the advance of the neo-liberal state, particularly in an Anglo-American context, but increasingly across the developed world. Some implications of this for social work are apparent in moves away from more universal welfare provision towards the targeting of 'problem families' (Parton 1985) and in an ideological shift in focus from the needs and social integration of those who offend to a greater emphasis on individual responsibility, punishment and community safety. The emphasis on case management approaches, the assessment and management of risk, and interventions that seek to apply technical/rational solutions with a strong emphasis on a range of 'programmes' is redolent of the concerns of the English social reformers of the

19th century for classification and order. The wider social context of behaviour, the impact of structural factors such as poverty and community fragmentation have become marginalised in social work practice. This focus on the individual rather than the individual within society reflects the way in which social work is increasingly conceptualised. In the UK, New Labour's focus on community privileges the protection of law abiding communities from the 'other' of the offender, over considerations of how communities can contribute to solutions through better social integration and social cohesion (Barry, 2005). Social workers in this respect can be cast as functionaries within a neo-liberal state apparatus.

For some time Scotland seemed to be resisting the worst excesses of these developments especially in relation to youth justice. However, since Jack McConnell became First Minister in 2002, the pace of change has been relentless and policy incorporated developments south of the border, including legislation around anti-social behaviour, an increase in the number of secure accommodation places; the piloting of a youth court, and a major review of the children's hearings system. There is some irony in this, inasmuch as the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament, which Donald Dewar, as First Minister, suggested would find Scottish solutions for Scottish problems, has been only too quick to source, often untested, solutions from elsewhere, risking an erosion rather than a reclamation of distinct features of a Scottish tradition.

A consequence of the direction social work as a profession has taken or been taken over the past couple of decades is uncertainty over professional identity, a loss of morale and of staff. The 21st Century Review attests to over-bureaucratisation and regulation and of social workers unable to engage in the relationally based work that brought them into the profession in the first place. The Review concludes that social work cannot go on in its present state. However, it offers few pointers about what, if any, underpinning or unifying philosophical purpose it envisages for the profession, focussing instead on organisational and cultural changes. The absence of any underpinning philosophical purpose in the Review may create spaces for practitioners to assert one. The state of flux in which social work finds itself along with other developments around joint working,

especially between education and social work make the concept of social education attractive in providing a possible conceptual framework for the future of social work and indeed other disciplines such as community education and education in Scotland. This would be consonant with cultural traditions and with wider Europe models of practice.

Possibilities of social education and social pedagogy – putting the social back into social work

The adoption of ideas encapsulated within social education and social pedagogy hold out a number of possibilities for the future development of social work in a multidisciplinary context. We identify a few of these below.

Professional identity:

The 21st Century Review has brought questions of professional identity to the fore. We suggest here that social-educational approaches provide a compelling model on which to base any emerging identity for social work and indeed for other related professions. As we have argued, a social model is embodied in European approaches to welfare. While historically the concept of social pedagogy was rooted in educational sciences and social work in the social sciences, especially social policy, over the course of time these two traditions have grown together (Hamalainen, 2003). The combination of social and educational perspectives can be integrated and applied to social work to provide a theoretical base for disciplines concerned with organised social help. In theory and practice this combination of education and social help is likely to entail certain ways of understanding the tasks of social work and its position, role and function in society. Traditionally, this perspective directs attention to those aspects of social help that deal with the aims and means of individual human growth. A social education approach broadens that to include the integration of the individual in society and the promotion of social functioning, inclusion, participation, identity and competence as members of society with shared responsibilities to that society. It offers a practical means of ‘promoting social welfare’ as charged by Scottish legislation.

The adoption of a social educational model may hold out attractions for social workers at a time when there is considerable disillusionment around the technocratic and managerial paradigms that have dominated the profession over the past decade or so (Meagher and Parton, 2004, Ruch, 2005). Social educational models through providing a framework for the consideration of the individual in society offer a welcome counterpoint to the atomistic tendencies of neo-liberalism. Moreover, they are critical and change oriented (Hamalainen, 2003), again appealing to the social justice orientation of social workers.

Re-connecting education and social wellbeing: a whole child model

The concept of ‘the whole child’ is re-emerging in policy directions in children’s services and youth justice in the UK. In England and Wales *Every Child Matters* (2004) and, in Scotland, *Getting it Right for Every Child* (2005), both point to the need for multi-systemic and holistic approaches to meet the individual and social needs of children. Structurally, many local authorities are merging children and family social work with education services. To bring children together under the umbrella of a universal service such as education with additional support for those children who need it, has obvious advantages. New community schools provide a model of such an approach. Yet, given the historical bifurcation of education and social care, bringing social work and education together only at policy and organisational levels, without any underpinning or commonly understood conceptual base, will not provide the kind of integrated service for children and families that is intended or required. Teachers and educators will continue to process children through crowded curricula, passing on the casualties of that system as children ‘at risk’, anti-social or offenders, to social workers who, if they respond at all, will do so within the child protection and risk management meta-narrative which has come to dominate practice over the past decade or so. The complex needs of the whole child are easily lost in the professionalisation of distinct disciplines, despite the political zeitgeist exhorting professionals to work together. The current direction of policy and structural developments cries out for the conceptual synthesis a social educational model might provide.

Putting the relationship back into social work

The importance of the personal relationship between worker and client has taken something of a hit in social work over the past 20 years or so. The drive to identify ‘what works?’ has led policy makers to look for technical/rational solutions to complex social problems. The 21st Century Review marks an important return to the centrality of purposeful relationships as central to any effective model of practice. We would argue that they could be given greater purpose within a social educational model, especially in a Scottish cultural context, where the educational ideal is well-embedded and carries with it notions of rigour and discipline.

Adoption of a social education model has implications for the way in which the social work role is conceptualized. The working alliance between social worker and clients involves elements of personal development, identity construction and human growth. If it is to have a wider impact at a community and societal level it has to be essentially educational rather than therapeutic. From an educational perspective, forms and effects of social problems are likely to be considered in ways which stress human maturation rather than individual pathology. Educative rather than counselling methods are used to assist individuals and where necessary equip them with the skills to overcome social problems and obstacles to progress. A social pedagogical model emphasizes the importance of practical help and of ‘being with’ clients as they live their lives rather than through traditional ‘expert’ casework models.

Rights: An International Perspective

The near universal ratification by states of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) places importance on providing ‘a level playing field’ for children through universal prevention and early social intervention (Buist and Whyte 2004). The source documents on children’s rights, the Beijing Rules 1985, the Riyadh Guidelines, 1990 and the Havana Rules, 1990 offer a rounded picture of rights, encouraging the use of extra judicial solutions and specifically of socio-educational approaches to avoid the deprivation of liberty as well as the mobilisation of family and community resources to assist re-integration of young offenders (Hallett and Hazel, 1998).

The rights discourse in an Anglo-American tradition assumes narrower concerns for individual and legal rights, perhaps reflecting the Kantian origins of such rights claims. The manifestation of these claims in a UK context can be focussed on an individual child's rights to particular services or treatments. Taken to extremes, a rights discourse that focuses narrowly on individual and legal rights risks merely ensuring a right to due process as children and youth become subject to an ever-expanding range of correctional interventions, including the deprivation of liberty. It makes few statements about our hopes for children or about the kind of personal and professional relationships we wish to have with them.

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A focus on interpretations of children's rights, which goes beyond the legal and individual again seems to be embedded in Scottish traditions. Seed (1974) identifies explicit rights claims within the thinking of the pioneers of the ragged schools around children's rights to food, clothing and education, either from their parents or the public, while Jackson (2004) highlights a similar emphasis in the Kilbrandon Report and the children's hearings system on children's social and cultural rights. Similarly, 'Social pedagogy builds on an understanding of children's rights and respect for the child that is not limited to procedural matters or legislated requirements' (Boddy et al. 2006 p.96).

Conclusion

Discussions on the future of social work in Scotland taking place following the 21st Century Review offers opportunities to appraise the future direction of the profession. We argue here that there is merit in examining the way in which social welfare has developed and the values embodied within this, if more than a superficial understanding of its future role is to be achieved. We suggest from a historical overview that there are obvious points of disjunction between Scottish philosophical and cultural traditions and what has become the dominant model of social work practice with roots in Anglo-American traditions where social problems and human rights are overly individualised. By contrast, Scottish models of social education and the European concept of social

pedagogy look at social problems through a broadly educational lens and identify socio-educational solutions to address these. At a time when neo-liberal approaches to social welfare are encroaching across Europe we contend that there is merit in articulating and reclaiming what is distinct in Scottish and wider European traditions. We argue that the value base implicit in socio-educational and social pedagogic approaches is consonant with social workers' concerns over social justice and social change and with seeking solutions to social problems within normative conceptions of learning or 'upbringing', rather than a focus on deficits and pathology.

Reclaiming this tradition would require that curricular development and teaching be reframed to consider how education in its widest sense; the learning and rehearsing of good social habits values and behaviours, might provide an overarching framework for individual and social change. We offer this article to open up some of these ideas for debate rather than as a blueprint for service delivery.

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